

SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

The replacement paragraph at page 2, lines 16-18 is as follows:

B1
The present invention provides a growing medium comprising a self-supporting block formed from sphagnum ~~material~~ moss bound together by a binding material dispersed through the sphagnum ~~material~~ moss, said binding material being a compatible adhesive and being in aqueous dispersion.

The replacement paragraph at page 2, lines 25-27 is as follows:

B2
~~Preferably, the~~ The compatible adhesive ~~can be~~ is prepared as an aqueous dispersion, for ease of mixing with the sphagnum ~~material~~ moss. Ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) has been found very suitable as an adhesive.

The replacement paragraphs at page 3, lines 1 through 14 are as follows:

B3
Cont.
The present invention provides a method for preparing a self-supporting block of growing medium comprising the steps of:

- providing sphagnum moss;
- mixing with said sphagnum moss a binding material comprising a compatible adhesive, as hereinbefore defined, in the form of an aqueous dispersion which is mixed with the sphagnum moss to form a slurry;
- transferring said slurry to a mould;
- setting said binding material so that the binding material binds the sphagnum moss to form a solid block;
- removing the formed block from the mould.

1. ~~providing sphagnum material;~~
2. ~~mixing a binding material with said sphagnum material;~~
3. ~~transferring said mixture to a mould;~~

P3
Concl.

4. ~~setting said binding material so that the binding material binds the sphagnum material;~~

5. ~~removing the prepared block of growing medium from the mould.~~

~~Preferably the binding material is in the form of a liquid (typically an aqueous dispersion) and is mixed with the sphagnum material to form a slurry. The adhesive sets when the slurry dries. Alternatively, the binding material may be a melt bond powder which is mixed dry with the sphagnum material, and is set by heating.~~

P4

The three replacement paragraphs at page 3, line 31 through page 4, line 10 are as follows:

The predominant base component of the growing medium, which forms the major constituent of the growing medium, is sphagnum ~~material~~ moss. The sphagnum ~~material~~ moss may be sphagnum moss harvested in known manner, cleaned if necessary to remove weed seeds and other contaminants, chopped by passing through a shredder or auger, and dried.

Alternatively or additionally, the sphagnum ~~material~~ moss may be surplus or waste pieces of sphagnum moss which are by products from other sphagnum processing operations.

Shredded fibrous material (e.g., waste paper, wool, coconut fibre, shredded cork, shredded bark) may be mixed with the chopped sphagnum, to improve the strength of the finished product. The shredded fibrous material may be present up to about 5-20 percent by weight of the sphagnum ~~material~~ moss.

The replacement paragraph at page 4, lines 16 through 19 is as follows:

β5
The sphagnum ~~material~~ moss, fibrous material, and additives can be cleaned to any required degree required by phytosanitary regulations (e.g. by fumigation or gamma irradiation); the materials may be cleaned individually, or after the finished product has been formed.

Please delete the paragraphs at page 4, lines 31 through 33 as follows:

~~Wax based adhesives, including petroleum wax based adhesives.~~

~~Thermoplastics including melt bond powders.~~

The replacement paragraph at page 5, lines 9 through 12 is as follows:

β6
Preferably, the binding material selected is a water-based adhesive which can be prepared as a solution and mixed with the base material (sphagnum ~~material~~ moss alone or in combination with fibrous material and adhesives) to form a slurry which can be transferred into a mould to form any desired shape.

Please delete the paragraph at page 5, lines 17 through 22 as follows:

~~Another possibility is to use a binding material in the form of a melt bond powder; this powder is mixed into the base component(s) so as to be evenly dispersed, the mixture is placed in a mould in the desired shape, and is then heated to melt the powder and bond the base material into the desired shape. However, heating degrades the sphagnum material, and so it is preferred to use a melt bond powder which can be activated at a temperature below 60°C, preferably below 45°C.~~

The replacement paragraph at page 6, lines 30 through page 7, line 6 is as follows:

PM
To a base component of 13 grams of sphagnum ~~material~~ moss, with the optional addition of approximately 2.5 grams of fibrous material such as shredded wool or paper, is added a binding material in the form of 35 ml of ethylene vinyl acetate adhesive at 50 percent dilution. These components are thoroughly mixed (e.g. in mixer) to form a slurry and are placed in a mould of the desired final shape of the product. The slurry may be transferred to the mould manually or by auger feed or any other suitable known method. One or more apertures are formed in the upper finished surface of the slurry in the mould, using a mould template which is pressed onto the upper surface of the slurry in the mould; the application of the template lightly compresses the slurry:- typically, a mould plug 70 mm high would be reduced to approximately 40 mm high for the finished product.